

WASHINGTON D.C. – Oversight & Government Reform Committee Ranking Member Darrell Issa, [today in a letter](#) to Deputy Chief Technology Officer of the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy Andrew McLaughlin, asked him to explain what steps are being taken to ensure that contacts with Google lobbyists and other White House officials through his Gmail account are being properly archived as required by the Presidential Records Act. Andrew McLaughlin is the former head of Google's lobbying office and works on issues that directly affect the interests of his former company.

"It appears, by your own admission, that the people you e-mail most from your Gmail account include several senior colleagues within the Obama Administration, including Chief Technology Officer Aneesh Chopra and Director of Citizen Participation, and former Google coworker, Katie Jacobs Stanton. Additionally, your list of followers suggests that you remain actively engaged with more than two dozen individuals currently employed by Google, Inc, including a number of senior lobbyists and lawyers," wrote Issa to McLaughlin. "As you know, any e-mail sent or received by White House officials may be subject to retention under the Presidential Records Act (PRA). The use of personal e-mail accounts, such as Gmail, to conduct official business raises the prospect that presidential records will not be captured by the White House e-mail archiving system. Unless White House officials forward copies of their e-mails to their government e-mail account or maintain printed copies of the e-mail, there is a risk records subject to the PRA will not be retained as required by law."

The letter asks McLaughlin to respond to six questions about compliance with the Presidential Records Act by April 22, 2010.

Explained Issa on the reason for sending the letter:

"The American people have a right to expect that White House employees are working to advance the public interest and not the interests of the lobby shops who formerly employed them. The use of a Gmail account to communicate with lobbyists and evade transparency laws is at odds with President Obama's promises to limit the influence of lobbyists. The White House needs to address how it plans to ensure that communications with lobbyists and senior officials through private e-mail accounts are archived in full compliance with the law."

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